REMARKS

In response to the Communication dated December 2, 2003, which indicated that the Amendment filed August 13, 2003 was non-compliant with the new amendment format, the Amendment has been revised to indicate the status of Claims 6 and 14-27 as being cancelled.

Claims 1-5, 7-13, and 28-29 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 12, and 13 are the independent claims.

Claims 2-5 and 7-11 were indicated as being withdrawn from consideration at page 2 of the Office Action mailed November 19, 2002. Since many of those claims were rejected in the Office Action dated July 2, 2003, Applicants assume that the Examiner has chosen to consider those claims. Clarification is requested if that is not the case.

Claims 1, 12, and 13 have been amended to further emphasize the distinctions between the present invention and the cited art, and Claims 2-5 and 7-10 have been amended in view of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, discussed below. No new matter has been added.

Appended hereto are two replacement sheets of formal drawings, which incorporate the drawing changes requested on April 21, 2003 and approved by the Examiner in the July 2, 2003 Official Action.

Claims 2-5 and 7-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner deemed the term "said processing means" or "said control means" in those claims to lack sufficient antecedent basis. The claims have been amended in view of the Examiner's comments, and Applicants believe the basis for the rejection has been overcome. Favorable consideration is requested.

Claims 1, 12-13, and 28-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,115,818 (Barton) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,449,377 (Rhoads). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claims 1, 12, and 13, the present invention includes, *inter alia*, the feature of detecting whether an illegal process has been performed for input digital contents. When a digital watermark is correctly embedded in the digital contents, the same digital watermark has been repetitively embedded throughout the digital contents. The detecting is performed by extracting all of the digital watermarks embedded in the digital contents and judging that the illegal process has been performed when one or more of the extracted digital watermarks is different from the other extracted digital watermarks. These features are supported in the specification, for example, at least at pages 38-39.

Applicants submit that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features recited in Claims 1, 12, and 13. Accordingly, those claims are patentable over the cited art, whether that art is considered individually or taken in combination.

The dependent claims recite additional features that further distinguish the claimed invention from the cited art. Those claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, entry of this Amendment, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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